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SUBJECT: US EXPERTS DISCUSS FMCT AT CONFERENCE ON
DISARMAMENT

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¶1. (U) Summary: The U.S. Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) hosted two U.S experts July 29-31 to participate in CD informal discussions and reach out to key delegations on the proposed Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). The goal of the visit was to reinforce the argument that an FMCT is the issue most ripe for negotiation at the CD and to explain specific U.S. policy positions related to the proposed FMCT to key delegations. Dr. Stanley Fraley, senior advisor to the Department of State and former Director of VCI/NA, and Jeffrey Eberhardt, Director of VCI/NA, participated in an informal session of the CD on the proposed FMCT and a series of outreach events to CD delegations, effectively explaining and highlighting key U.S. policy elements relative to the proposed FMCT. Their visit yielded sustained substantive discussions of the FMCT, repeated positive acknowledgment by CD colleagues of the persuasive arguments they deployed to explain the U.S. position on verification of the FMCT, and the advantages for international security of pursuing a treaty soon rather than later. Numerous CD delegations expressed their appreciation for the cogent explanations presented by the two U.S. experts. End Summary

U.S. Experts Reach Openness Disarms CD Delegations

¶2. (U) Fraley and Eberhardt participated in a series of informal discussions with key CD delegations to explain U.S. policies on the FMCT and to highlight the importance of pursuing a proposed treaty without seeking solutions to the most complicated issues up front. Their expertise and ease in explaining complex issues gave them instant and sustained credibility, and substantively advanced U.S. arguments on these important policy issues. Fraley, with 30 years of experience working on the issue, brought balance and expertise to a debate that has acquired considerable political baggage over the years. His frank and thorough explanations of issues perceived by many to be complicated and contentious, including the issue of effective verification, illustrated the compelling rationale for the U.S. position. Eberhardt's concise explanations of the policy deliberations leading up to the U.S. decision that effective verification of an FMCT was unrealistic were appreciated for their candor and clarity, especially by delegations who believe the U.S. interagency process to be opaque. Their combined efforts gave the U.S. a powerful platform to reinvigorate an issue that many consider to have been flogged to death over the past several years.

Indians Seek Assurances on Stocks

¶3. (SBU) At a luncheon hosted by Ambassador Rocca for the Indian delegation, Fraley and Eberhardt responded effectively to numerous questions from the Indian delegation about U.S. intentions for an FMCT. Insisting that they attach no linkages to commencing negotiations of an FMCT, the Indians professed they have supported negotiations since 1993. Welcoming the detailed explanation of how the U.S. reached its conclusions that effective verification was not possible, the Indians focused on the issue of stocks of fissile material, and it clearly took them time to fully grasp that the U.S. would not yield on its opposition to including stocks in an FMCT. Reassured, the Indians left the lunch

with a greater appreciation of the U.S. position and more confident that they would not be isolated on the issue of stocks. As for verification, the Indians continued to believe that some form of international verification was preferable, even after Fraley's effective arguments that IAEA-type verification were not sufficient for an FMCT.

¶4. (U) DCM Larson also hosted a roundtable discussion with several delegations, including Netherlands, Turkey, Chile, Indonesia, Canada, and Romania. All delegations remained engaged throughout the meeting and expressed their gratitude for the candor and clarity of Fraley and Eberhardt's answers. On the subject of verification, Eberhardt again outlined the USG decision-making process, using the Shannon Mandate to U.S. advantage as a demonstration of its initial advocacy for verification. They reminded participants that the US would welcome proposals for effective verification, but clearly explained why anything less would be rejected as counterproductive (Note: namely, that it would undermine attempts to improve the NPT verification regime by accepting a lesser regime as effective. End note.) As a demonstration of their openness, they patiently listen to various proposals by the participants, giving specific explanations of why the proposed regimes were impracticable (releasing proliferation-sensitive information) or ineffective (failing to account for diversion). Fraley helpfully reminded the delegations that the draft FMCT would still be legally binding and subject to compliance procedures. Responding to questions about stocks, Fraley unequivocally rejected proposals to include stocks as a diversionary tactic, since stocks are a known non-starter for states possessing nuclear weapons. Delegations doubtless left the meeting with a stronger sense of U.S. dedication to an FMCT, as demonstrated by its long-standing moratorium and its voluntary safe-guards measures, which were outlined by Fraley and Eberhardt.

¶5. (U) See Geneva 00655 for detail on India's participation in the CD informal on the FMCT and related events that week.

¶6. (U) Comment: Fraley and Eberhardt were just what the doctor ordered for the CD. Their expertise, willingness to engage, and openness added renewed energy to the CD's discussions of the FMCT, and again confirmed that an FMCT is the issue most ripe for negotiation. Fraley's emphasis that a treaty with a straight-forward normative ban on fissile material production would advance international security interests quicker and more effectively than protracted negotiations won recognition (if not necessarily support) from many delegations, especially since the message came from a person with years of hard earned experience in the issue. The U.S. CD Delegation would welcome the chance to host these experts again at a time suited to most effectively leverage their expertise.

Rocca sends.
TICHENOR

NNNN

End Cable Text